

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****National Weather Service
Modernization and Associated
Restructuring**

AGENCY: National Weather Service (NWS), NOAA, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and opportunity for public comment.

SUMMARY: The NWS is publishing proposed certifications for the consolidation, automation, and closure of the following Weather Service offices at the indicated FAA Weather Observation Service Level:

(1) Madison Weather Service Office (WSO) which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and have its services consolidated into the future Milwaukee, Green Bay, and LaCrosse Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs);

(2) Peoria WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and have its services consolidated into the future Central Illinois and Quad Cities WFOs;

(3) Rochester WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and have its services consolidated into the future Buffalo and Binghamton WFOs; and

(4) Residual Tucson WSO which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level B and have its services consolidated into the future Tucson WFO. In accordance with Pub. Law 102-567, the public will have 60-days in which to comment on these proposed consolidation, automation, and closure certifications.

DATES: Comments are requested by June 10, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the proposed consolidation, automation and closure packages should be sent to Tom Beaver, Room 09356, 1325 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone 301-713-0300. All comments should be sent to Tom Beaver at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Scanlon at 301-713-1698 ext 151.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with section 706 of Pub. Law 102-567, the Secretary of Commerce must certify that these consolidations, automations, and closures will not result in any degradation of service to the affected areas of responsibility and must publish the proposed consolidation, automation, and closure certifications in the FR. The documentation supporting each

proposed certification includes the following:

(1) A draft memorandum by the meteorologist(s)-in-charge recommending the certification, the final of which will be endorsed by the Regional Director and the Assistant Administrator of the NWS if appropriate, after consideration of public comments and completion of consultation with the Modernization Transition Committee (the Committee);

(2) A description of local weather characteristics and weather-related concerns which affect the weather services provided within the service area;

(3) A comparison of the services provided within the service area and the services to be provided after such action;

(4) A description of any recent or expected modernization of NWS operation which will enhance services in the service area;

(5) An identification of any area within the affected service area which would not receive coverage (at an elevation of 10,000 feet) by the next generation weather radar network;

(6) Evidence, based upon operational demonstration of modernized NWS operations, which was considered in reaching the conclusion that no degradation in service will result from such action including the WSR-88D Radar Commissioning Report(s), User Confirmation of Services Report(s), and the Decommissioning Readiness Report (as applicable);

(7) Evidence, based upon operational demonstration of modernized NWS operations, which was considered in reaching the conclusion that no degradation in service will result from such action including the ASOS Commissioning Report; series of three letters between NWS and FAA confirming that weather services will continue in full compliance with applicable flight aviation rules after ASOS commissioning; Surface Aviation Observation Transition Checklist documenting transfer of augmentation and backup responsibility from NWS to FAA; successful resolution of ASOS user confirmation of services complaints; and in-place supplementary data program at the responsible WFO(s);

(8) Warning and forecast verification statistics for pre-modernized and modernized services which were utilized in determining that services have not been degraded;

(9) An Air Safety Appraisal for offices which are located on an airport; and

(10) A letter appointing the liaison officer.

These proposed certifications do not include any report of the Committee which could be submitted in accordance with sections 706(b)(6) and 707(c) of Pub. Law 102-567. In December 1995 the Committee decided that, in general, they would forgo the optional consultation on proposed certifications. Instead, the Committee would just review certifications after the public comment period had closed so their consultation would be with the benefit of public comments that had been submitted.

This notice does not include the complete certification packages because they are too voluminous to publish. Copies of the certification packages and supporting documentation can be obtained through the contact listed above.

Once all public comments have been received and considered, the NWS will complete consultation with the Committee and determine whether to proceed with the final certification. If a decision to certify is made, the Secretary of Commerce must publish the final certification in the FR and transmit the certification to the appropriate Congressional committees prior to consolidating, automating, and closing these offices.

Dated: April 7, 1997.

Elbert W. Friday, Jr.,

Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.

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ACTION: Notice and opportunity for public comment.

SUMMARY: The NWS is publishing proposed certifications for the automation and closure of the following Weather Service offices at the indicated FAA Weather Observation Service Level:

(1) Residual Indianapolis Weather Service Office (WSO) which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation Service Level A and with services being provided by the future Indianapolis WFO;

(2) Residual Kansas City Weather Service Office (WSO) which will be automated at FAA Weather Observation